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San Francisco Chronicle

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The ***San Francisco Chronicle*** is a newspaper serving primarily the San Francisco Bay Area of the U.S. state of California, but distributed throughout Northern and Central California, from the Sacramento area and Emerald Triangle south to Santa Barbara County. It was founded in 1865 as *The Daily Dramatic Chronicle* by teenage brothers Charles de Young and Michael H. de Young.[2]

The paper benefitted from the growth of San Francisco and was the largest circulation newspaper on the West Coast of the United States by 1880. It has experienced a rapid fall in circulation in the early 21st century, and was ranked 24th by circulation nationally for the six months to March 2010. The newspaper has an online edition, ***SFGate***, which is published by the SFGate.com division.[3]

San Francisco Chronicle

The May 13, 2010 front page of "The Voice of the West"

Type	Daily newspaper
Format	Broadsheet
Owner(s)	Hearst Corporation
Publisher	Jeffrey M. Johnson
Editor	Ward H. Bushee
Founded	January 16, 1865
Headquarters	901 Mission Street San Francisco, California
Circulation	223,549 Daily 286,121 Sunday[1]
ISSN	1932-8672
OCLC number	8812614
Official website	sfchronicle.com sfgate.com

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History [edit]

Between World War II and 1971, new editor Scott Josephine Newhall took a bold and somewhat provocative approach to news presentation. Newhall's *Chronicle* included investigative reporting by such journalists as Pierre Salinger, later to play a prominent role in national politics, and Paul Avery, the staffer who pursued the trail of the self-named "Zodiac Killer" whose crimes chilled late-1960s San Francisco. It also featured such colorful columnists as Pauline Phillips, who wrote under the name "Dear Abby," "Count Marco" (Marc Spinelli), Stanton Delaplane, Terence O'Flaherty, Lucius Beebe, Art Hoppe, Charles McCabe, and Herb Caen.

The Old Chronicle Building following the 1906 earthquake and fire

The newspaper grew in circulation to become the city's largest, overtaking the rival *San Francisco Examiner*. The demise of other San Francisco dailies through the late 1950s and early 1960s left the *Examiner* and the *Chronicle* to battle for circulation and readership superiority.

Joint Operating Agreement [edit]

The competition between the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* took a financial toll on both papers until the summer of 1965, when a merger of sorts created a Joint Operating Agreement under which the *Chronicle* became the city's sole morning daily while the *Examiner* changed to afternoon publication (which ultimately led to a declining readership).

The newspapers were officially owned by the San Francisco Newspaper Agency which managed sales and distribution for both newspapers and was charged with ensuring that one newspaper's circulation did not grow at the expense of the other. Revenue was split equally, which led to a situation widely understood to benefit the *Examiner* wherein the *Chronicle*, which had a circulation four times larger than its rival, subsidized the afternoon newspaper.[4]

The two newspapers produced a joint Sunday edition, with the *Examiner* publishing the news sections and the Sunday magazine and the *Chronicle* responsible for the tabloid entertainment section and the book review. From 1965 on the two papers shared a single classified-advertising operation. This arrangement stayed in place until the Hearst Corporation took full control of the *Chronicle*.

Push into the Suburbs [edit]

Jack Breibart and Bill German in the newsroom in the 1990s

Beginning in the early 1990s, the *Chronicle* started to face competition beyond the borders of San Francisco. The newspaper had long enjoyed a wide reach in Northern California, along the Central Coast, Inland Empire and even distributed papers as far as Honolulu, Hawaii. There was little competition in the Bay Area suburbs and other areas that the newspaper served, but as Knight Ridder purchased most of the East Bay newspapers in 1995, the *Chronicle* realized it had to step up suburban coverage.

The *Chronicle* launched five zoned sections to appear in the Friday edition of the paper. The sections covered San Francisco, and four different suburban areas. They each featured a unique columnist, enterprise pieces and local news specific to the community. The newspaper added 40 full-time staff positions to work in the suburban bureaus. Despite the push to focus on suburban coverage, the *Chronicle* was hamstrung by the Sunday edition, which, being produced by the San Francisco-centric "un-*Chronicle*" *Examiner*, had none of the focus on the suburban communities that the *Chronicle* was striving to cultivate.[5]

Sale to Hearst [edit]

The de Young family controlled the paper, via the Chronicle Publishing Company, until July 27, 2000, when it was sold to Hearst Communications, Inc., which owned the *Examiner*. Following the sale, the Hearst Corporation transferred the *Examiner* to the Fang family, publisher of the *San Francisco Independent* and *AsianWeek*, along with a $66-million subsidy.[6] Under the new owners, the *Examiner* became a free tabloid, leaving the *Chronicle* as the only daily broadsheet newspaper in San Francisco.

In 1949, the de Young family founded KRON-TV (Channel 4), the Bay Area's third television station. Until the mid-1960s, the station (along with KRON-FM), operated from the basement of the Chronicle Building, on Mission Street. KRON moved to its present studios at 1001 Van Ness Avenue (on the former site of St. Mary's Cathedral, which burned down in 1962). KRON was sold in 1999 and, after years of being San Francisco's NBC affiliate, became an independent station on January 1, 2002 when NBC—tired of the DeYoungs' repeated refusal to sell KRON to the network—purchased KNTV in San Jose from Granite Broadcasting Corporation for $230 million.[7]

San Francisco Chronicle CEO John Sias announces the sale of the San Francisco Chronicle to the Hearst Corporation August 6, 1999.

Since the Hearst Corporation took ownership in 2000 the *Chronicle* has made periodic changes to its organization and design, but on February 1, 2009, as the newspaper began its 145th year of publication, the *Chronicle* Sunday edition introduced a redesigned paper featuring a modified logo, new section and page organization, new features, bolder, colored section-front banners and new headline and text typography. The frequent bold-faced, all-capital-letter headlines typical of the *Chronicle*'s front page were eliminated. Editor Ward Bushee's note heralded the issue as the start of a "new era" for the *Chronicle*.

On July 6, 2009, the paper unveiled some alterations to the new design that included yet newer section fronts and wider use of color photographs and graphics. In a special section publisher Frank J. Vega described new, state-of-the-art printing operations enabling the production of what he termed "A Bolder, Brighter Chronicle." The newer look was accompanied by a reduction in size of the broadsheet. Such moves are similar to those made by other prominent American newspapers such as the *Chicago Tribune* and *Orlando Sentinel*, which in 2008 unveiled radically new designs even as changing reader demographics and general economic conditions necessitated physical reductions of the newspapers.

On November 9, 2009, the *Chronicle* became the first newspaper in the nation to print on high-quality glossy paper.[8] The high-gloss paper is used for some section fronts and inside pages.

Staff [edit]

As of 2009 the publisher of the *Chronicle* is Frank J. Vega, the President is

Mark Adkins,[9] the executive vice president and editor is Ward H. Bushee and the editorial page editor is John Diaz.

Chronicle Insider columnists Phil Matier and Andrew Ross in the newsroom

Web [edit]

The online version of the newspaper, SFGate.com is led by President Mark Adkins.[9] As well as publishing the *San Francisco Chronicle* online, SFGate adds other features not available in the print version, such as blogs and podcasts. SFGate was one of the earliest major market newspaper websites to be launched, having done so in 1994, at the time of The Newspaper Guild strike; meanwhile the union published its own news website, *San Francisco Free Press*.[10]

Praise, criticism and features [edit]

The paper has received the Pulitzer Prize on a number of occasions. Despite an illustrious and long history, the paper's news reportage is not as extensive as in the past. The current day *Chronicle* has followed the trend of other American newspapers, devoting increasing attention to local and regional news and cultural and entertainment criticism to the detriment of the paper's traditionally strong national and international reportage, though the paper does maintain a Washington, D.C., bureau. This increased focus on local news is a response to the competition from other Bay Area newspapers including the resurrected *San Francisco Examiner*, the *Oakland Tribune*, the *Contra Costa Times* and the *San Jose Mercury News*.

Lance Williams and Mark Fainaru-Wada received the 2004 George Polk Award for Sports Reporting.[11] Fainaru-Wada and Williams were recognized for their work on uncovering the BALCO scandal, which linked San Francisco Giants star Barry Bonds to performance-enhancing drugs. While the two above-named reporters broke the news, they are by no means the only sports writers of note at the Chronicle. The Chronicle's sports section, called *Sporting Green* as it is printed on green-tinted pages, is staffed with two dozen writers. The section's best-known writers are its columnists: Bruce Jenkins, Ann Killion, Gwenn Knapp, Scott Ostler, and Susan Slusser the first female President of the Baseball Writer's Association of America (BBWAA).

Another area of note is the architecture column by John King; the *Chronicle* is still one of the few American papers to present a regular column on architectural issues. The paper also has regular weekly sections devoted to 'Food', 'Home & Garden', and 'Wine', the latter of which is unique. *San Francisco Chronicle Magazine* is published on the first Sunday of each month and regularly focuses on the previously mentioned topics. In early 2006 a new section, '96 Hours',[12] was added to the Thursday edition of the paper, covering entertainment from that day through Sunday.

Herb Caen [edit]

Most likely the Chronicle's best-known and most widely quoted writer was the Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Herb Caen (1916–1997), a Sacramento native who joined the newspaper in 1938 to write a local-radio news column. Caen eventually covered city comings and goings of all kinds—politics, business, and society both high and low, with some San Francisco history added for good measure. He moved to the rival *Examiner* in 1950 but returned to what he often called "The Chron" in 1958, where he remained until retirement.

Herb Caen, San Francisco columnist, in the 1990s

His column was subtitled "*Baghdad-by-the-Bay*" for many years and later shortened to an eponymous title for the rest of its existence. For many years *"Herb Caen"* was the only feature on its page (it traditionally shared a section front with a Macy's advertisement). For most of his column's history, Caen somewhat in jest railed against the slang "Frisco", considering it a demeaning term for the city, and in 1953 wrote a book called "*Don't Call It Frisco*" after a 1918 *Examiner* news item of the same name.[13] Caen's view of San Francisco was egalitarian and eclectic; he made the daily round of restaurants, clubs, bars, and shops in both the tony and the less elegant quarters of the city. Among his friends were socialites, artists, business leaders, politicians, visiting celebrities, and the unknown eking out an unglamorous existence on the downtown streets—characters equally prominent on the city's stage in Caen's view.

Caen gave his readers an intimate cross-sectioned look at San Francisco that few local writers anywhere could offer. Caen also took a positive, if sometimes bemused, view of those in the forefront of the convulsive cultural (and counter-cultural) changes to the city from the 1950s to the 1970s. Frequent observations of the city's "beatniks" (a term he may have coined) and "hippies" appeared in his writing, and he extended the hand of acceptance to those who added to San Francisco's warmth and color. With tongue-in-cheek he called his writing "three-dot journalism"; his columns comprised brief items neatly tied together by ellipses.

His Sunday feature was often a sentimental retrospective of San Francisco, sometimes comparing the present state of the city with the 1930s and 1940s—which he celebrated as a halcyon time. Though he lamented the incursion of

freeways, high-rise towers, and chain stores as a devaluing of his beloved "city on golden hills," he usually concluded that his adopted home town's beauty and character was sufficient to withstand any and all changes. From the late 1940s to late 1990s a dozen books of Caen's writing and reflections were published.

In late 1996, after some protracted absences led readers to inquire after his whereabouts, Caen disclosed that he was being treated for lung cancer; after several public ceremonies and fetes (and after a section of the city's waterfront Embarcadero was renamed for him) he retired, passing away on February 1, 1997.

Challenges [edit]

Circulation has fallen precipitously since the heyday of the dot-com boom from 1997 to 2001. The Chronicle's circulation dropped by 16.6% between 2004 and 2005 to 400,906;[14] in 2006, daily circulation dropped to 373,805.[15] In response, the newspaper has cut back on local news coverage and takes many national and international stories from the Associated Press instead of relying on *Chronicle* correspondents.[*citation needed*] There have also been major cutbacks in staff, with one fourth of the newsroom being let go in 2007.[16] At the same time, the online edition has continued its growth and in 2006 SFGate was fifth among U.S. newspaper Web sites with 5.2 million unique users per month.[*citation needed*]

On February 24, 2009, the Hearst Corporation released a statement that the *Chronicle*'s financial position necessitated sharp and immediate reductions in operating costs. In a joint statement Frank A. Bennack Jr., Hearst vice chairman and chief executive, and Steven R. Swartz, president of Hearst Newspapers, said that the paper, with a circulation of 312,000, had sustained losses in every year since 2001, lost more than $50 million in 2008 and faced an even gloomier 2009.[17] The statement read in part, "Without the specific changes we are seeking across the entire Chronicle organization, we will have no choice but to quickly seek a buyer for The Chronicle or, should a buyer not be found, to shut the newspaper down."[18] Media reports in late February speculated that the paper might be required to slash its workforce by half to remain in business. Hearst recently took the same course with the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, and if the *Chronicle* is closed San Francisco would be America's largest city without a full-service English-language daily newspaper.

On October 26, 2009, the Audit Bureau of Circulations reported that the *Chronicle* had suffered a 25.8% drop in circulation for the six-month period ending September 2009, to 251,782 subscribers, the largest percentage drop in circulation of any major newspaper in the United States.[19] The *Chronicle* publisher, Frank Vega, said in response that the drop was expected as the paper moved to a business model that focused less on advertising, and hence less on high numbers of subscribers, and more on increased subscription fees. The paper claimed that the new strategy had produced significantly improved financial results.[20]

Features [edit]

The Chronicle features different sections every day.

Monday, **Tuesday**, & **Wednesday**: Main News; Sporting Green; Bay Area; Business Report; Datebook

Thursday: Main News; Sporting Green; Bay Area; Business Report; Datebook; 96 Hours

Friday: Main News; Sporting Green; Bay Area; Business Report; Datebook; Cars

Saturday: Main News; Sporting Green; Bay Area; Business Report; Datebook

Sunday: Main News; Sporting Green; Bay Area; Business Report; Insight; Books; Food & Wine; Real Estate; Open Homes; SFiS Style; Home & Garden; Travel; Datebook; Chronicle Magazine (1st Sunday of the month)

Publishers [edit]

- M. H. de Young 1865 to 1925[21]
- George T. Cameron 1925 to 1955[21]
- Charles de Young Thieriot 1955 to 1977
- Richard Tobin Thieriot 1977 to 1993
- John Sias 1993 to 1999 First publisher not a member of the de Young/Cameron/Thieriot Family.
- Steven Falk 2003 to 2004
- Frank Vega 2004 to 2013
- Jeffrey M. Johnson 2013 to Present[22]

Historical note [edit]

The Zodiac Killer sent a cryptogram in three sections in letters to the Chronicle and two other papers during his murder spree in the late 1960s.[23]

Best-seller list [edit]

The *Chronicle* best-seller list represents data from booksellers in the greater San Francisco Bay Area, one of the major bookstore markets left in the United States.[24]

Prices [edit]

The *San Francisco Chronicle* prices are: $1 daily, $3 Sunday/Thanksgiving Day.

See also [edit]

- San Francisco Chronicle Magazine
- Chronicle Publishing Company
- KRON-TV

San Francisco Bay Area portal

Journalism portal

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22. ^ Baker, David R. (May 24, 2013). *The San Francisco Chronicle* http://www.sfgate.com/default/article/SF-Chronicle-names-new-management-team-4544528.php |url= missing title (help).
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External links [edit]

- SFGate: Online version of the newspaper , contains freely searchable archive of all articles since 1995
- SFGate mobile website
- @SFGate on Twitter
- San Francisco Chronicle on Facebook

- San Francisco public library databases , contains instructions on searching archived papers 1865-1922
- SFGate blogs
- Chronicle Sold to Hearst Examiner goes on sales block
- Hearst subsidiary profile of the *San Francisco Chronicle*

v· t· e·	Hearst Corporation	
Daily newspapers	*The Advocate* · *Times Union* · *Beaumont Enterprise* · *Connecticut Post* · *Edwardsville Intelligencer* · *Greenwich Time* · *Houston Chronicle* · *Huron Daily Tribune* · *Laredo Morning Times* · *Midland Daily News* · *Midland Reporter-Telegram* · *The News-Times* · *Plainview Daily Herald* · *San Antonio Express-News* · ***San Francisco Chronicle*** · *seattlepi.com* ·	
Weekly newspapers	*La Voz de Houston* ·	
Magazines	*Car and Driver* · *Cosmopolitan* · *Country Living* · *Elle* · *Elle Decor* · *Esquire* · *Food Network Magazine* · *Good Housekeeping* · *Harper's Bazaar* · *House Beautiful* · *Marie Claire* (US) · *O, The Oprah Magazine* · *Popular Mechanics* · *Redbook* · *Road & Track* · *Seventeen* · *Town & Country* · *Woman's Day* · CDS Global · Hearst Magazines Digital Media (ELLEgirl.com · espin) · Hearst Magazines International (*All About Soap* · *Company* · Digital Spy · *Elle* · *Esquire* · *Inside Soap* · *Psychologies* · *Quo* · *Sugar* · *Zest*) ·	
Television stations by affiliation	ABC	KETV · KHBS / KHOG · KITV · KMBC · KOAT · KOCO · WAPT · WCVB · WISN · WMUR · WMTW · WPBF · WTAE ·
	Other	CBS (KCCI · WLKY) · CW (KCWE · WKCF) · Independent (WMOR-TV) · MyNetworkTV (KQCA) ·
	NBC	KCRA-TV · KSBW · WBAL-TV · WDSU · WESH · WGAL · WLWT · WPTZ / WNNE · WXII-TV · WYFF ·
Radio stations	WBAL · WIYY ·	
Entertainment and syndication	A+E Networks (50%) · Cosmopolitan Television (part owner) · DailyINK · ESPN Inc. (20%) · Esquire Network (50%) · King Features Syndicate · NorthSouth Productions (50%) · RealAge · Reed Brennan Media Associates ·	
Business media	*Electronic Products* · First DataBank · Fitch Group (50%) · *Motor* ·	
Real estate	Hearst Tower · Hearst Service Center ·	

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